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August 1993

Wells Resource Management Plan

APPROVED
Wild Horse Amendment and Decision Record

Photo by Gary Back, BLM Wildlife Biologist, Elko

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August 2, 1993

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your information and use is a copy of the Wells Resource Management Plan (RMP) Approved Wild Horse Amendment and Decision Record (DR). This RMP amendment outlines the level of management for wild horses on a portion of the public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) within the Wells Resource Area of the Elko District. The DR summarizes and completes the environmental process for this RMP amendment.

This document contains two parts. PART 1: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT addresses the amendment's **Resource Decisions; Implementation; Monitoring and Evaluation; Support Requirements;** and **Summary of Public Involvement.** PART 2: DECISION RECORD contains a summary of the **Resource Decisions; Finding of No Significant Impact; Rational** for **Decisions; Compliance and Monitoring;** and **Approval.**

Implementation of the "Resource Decisions" by the BLM's Elko District Manager may begin 30 days following the availability of this document to the public.

Additional copies of this Approved Amendment and DR may be obtained from the BLM's Wells Resource Area Manager, 3900 E. Idaho Street, P.O. Box 831, Elko, NV 89803. All supporting documentation may be reviewed at the Elko District Office at the same address.

Sincerely,

Billy R. Templeton

Billy R. Templeton
State Director, Nevada

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Wells Resource Management Plan

APPROVED

Wild Horse Amendment and Decision Record

Prepared by
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Elko District

Billy R. Templeton
State Director, Nevada

August 2, 1993

The Wells Resource Management Plan Approved Wild Horse Amendment and Decision Record outlines the level of management for wild horses in the Wells Resource Area in the southeast portion of Elko County by the Wells Resource Area, Elko District of the Bureau of Land Management.

For further information contact: Wells Resource Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 3900 East Idaho Street, P.O. Box 831, Elko, NV 89803, or telephone (702) 753-0200.

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WELLS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

APPROVED

WILD HORSE AMENDMENT
and
DECISION RECORD

INTRODUCTION

This Approved Wild Horse Amendment and Decision Record (DR) to the Wells Resource Management Plan (RMP) outlines the level of management for wild horses within the Wells Resource Area, Elko District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (see Map 1 for location within the State of Nevada). This Resource Area is located in the eastern half of Elko County.

Through a review of the wild horse program in this resource area, it was determined that problems were occurring with the management of wild horses and that an amendment was necessary. This amendment was completed to establish wild horse herd management areas (HMA), solve the problems with checkerboard land pattern conflicts, identify habitat requirements and management practices, establish initial herd size, develop factors for adjustments in herd size, identify constraints on other resources, and combine herd areas for the purpose of improving management of wild horses.

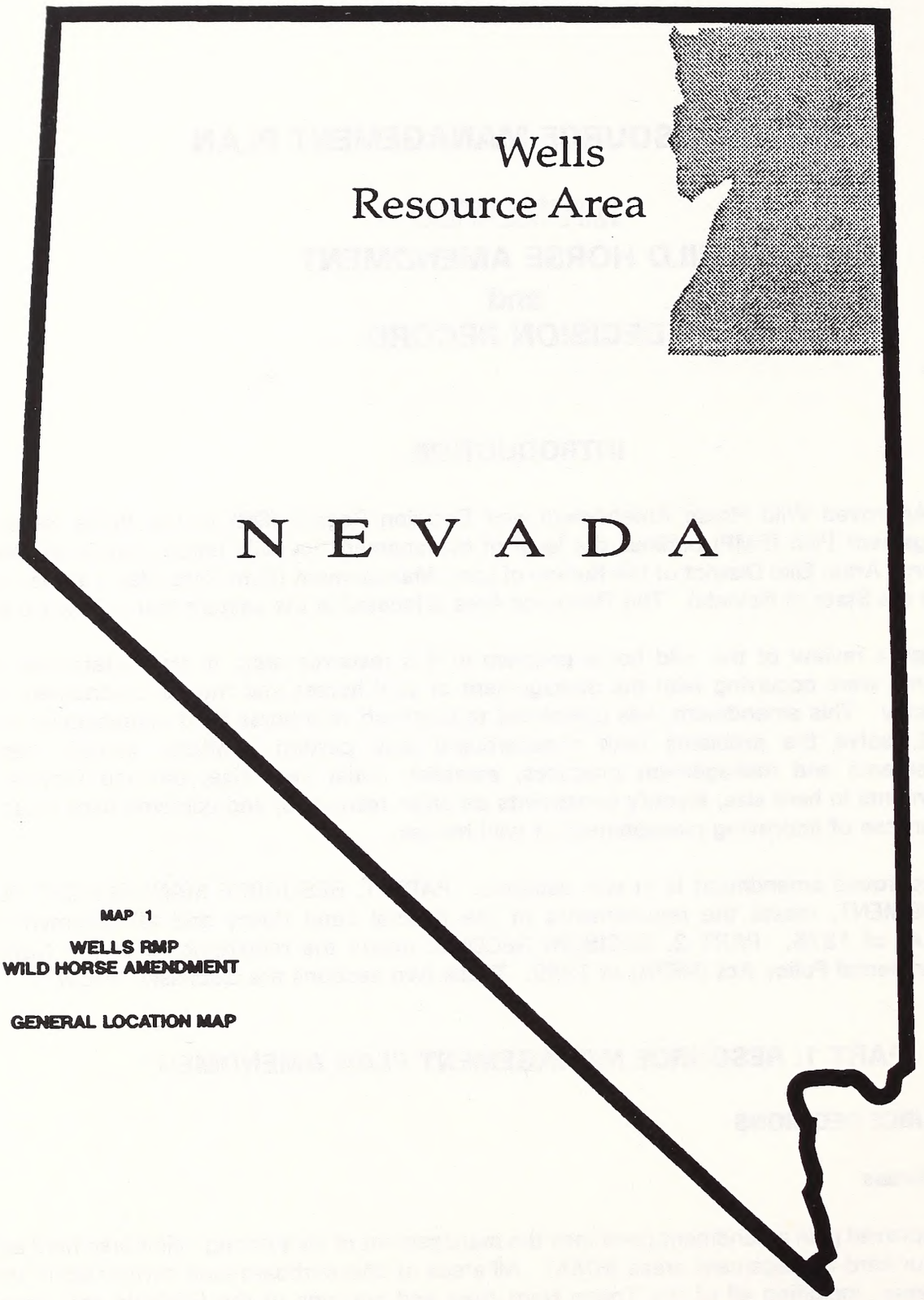
This approved amendment is in two sections. PART 1, RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT, meets the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. PART 2, DECISION RECORD, meets the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. These two sections are discussed below.

PART 1: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

A. RESOURCE DECISIONS

Wild Horses

The approved plan amendment combines the management of six existing wild horse herd areas into four herd management areas (HMA). All areas of checkerboard land ownership in these herd areas, including all of the Toano Herd Area and portions of the Goshute and Spruce-Pequop Herd Areas, will be managed as horse free areas. The management of wild horses begins at initial herd size and will be maintained only in designated HMAs. Adjustments in numbers will be based on monitoring and grazing allotment evaluations. Wild horse numbers



MAP 1

WELLS RMP
WILD HORSE AMENDMENT

GENERAL LOCATION MAP

in excess of the initial herd size will be removed within statewide priorities. The following are the desired objectives for wild horse management and the determinations to meet these objectives:

Objectives:

1. To manage wild horses outside of checkerboard areas where land ownership patterns are not a problem for management.

2. To manage wild horses within HMAs and to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance consistent with other resource needs.

3. To combine portions of the wild horse herd areas where horses intermix between herd areas.

Management Determinations:[1]

1. Delineate and manage wild horses in four HMAs as follows: Antelope Valley Herd Area (includes 44 percent of the former Cherry Creek Herd Area); Goshute Herd Area; Maverick-Medicine Herd Area (includes 56 percent of the former Cherry Creek Herd Area); and Spruce-Pequop Herd Area.

2. Remove wild horses from checkerboard areas, which include all of the Toano Herd Area and portions of the Goshute and Spruce-Pequop Herd Areas and manage them as wild horse free areas.

3. Remove sufficient wild horses to attain the initial herd size and maintain populations at a level which will maintain a thriving natural ecological balance consistent with other resource values (see Table 1 for specific numbers and adjustment factors for each HMA).

4. Develop eight water sources to improve wild horse distribution, modify approximately one mile of existing fence so as not to impede wild-free roaming behavior, and construct approximately eighteen miles of new fence to prevent the return of wild horses to checkerboard land patterns (see Table 1 for projects to be constructed for each HMA).

5. The 1971 Wild Horse Herd Areas will continue to be maintained (see Map 3).

[1] **Management determinations for each HMA are outlined in Table 1 and shown on Map 2 (see the following two pages).**

B. IMPLEMENTATION

The management determinations in this amendment will be implemented over the next 12 years to coincide with the implementation of the existing Wells RMP. Mitigating Measures listed under the heading "WILD HORSES" and subheading "Standard Operating Procedures" as outlined in PART II - MANAGEMENT DECISION SUMMARY section of the Wells RMP, will be followed. In addition, those standard operating procedures (SOP) that are applicable to range improvement project development (i.e., fences and water developments) as outlined in the various other resource headings, will also be followed.

TABLE 1
MANAGEMENT DETERMINATIONS FOR HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS - APPROVED PLAN

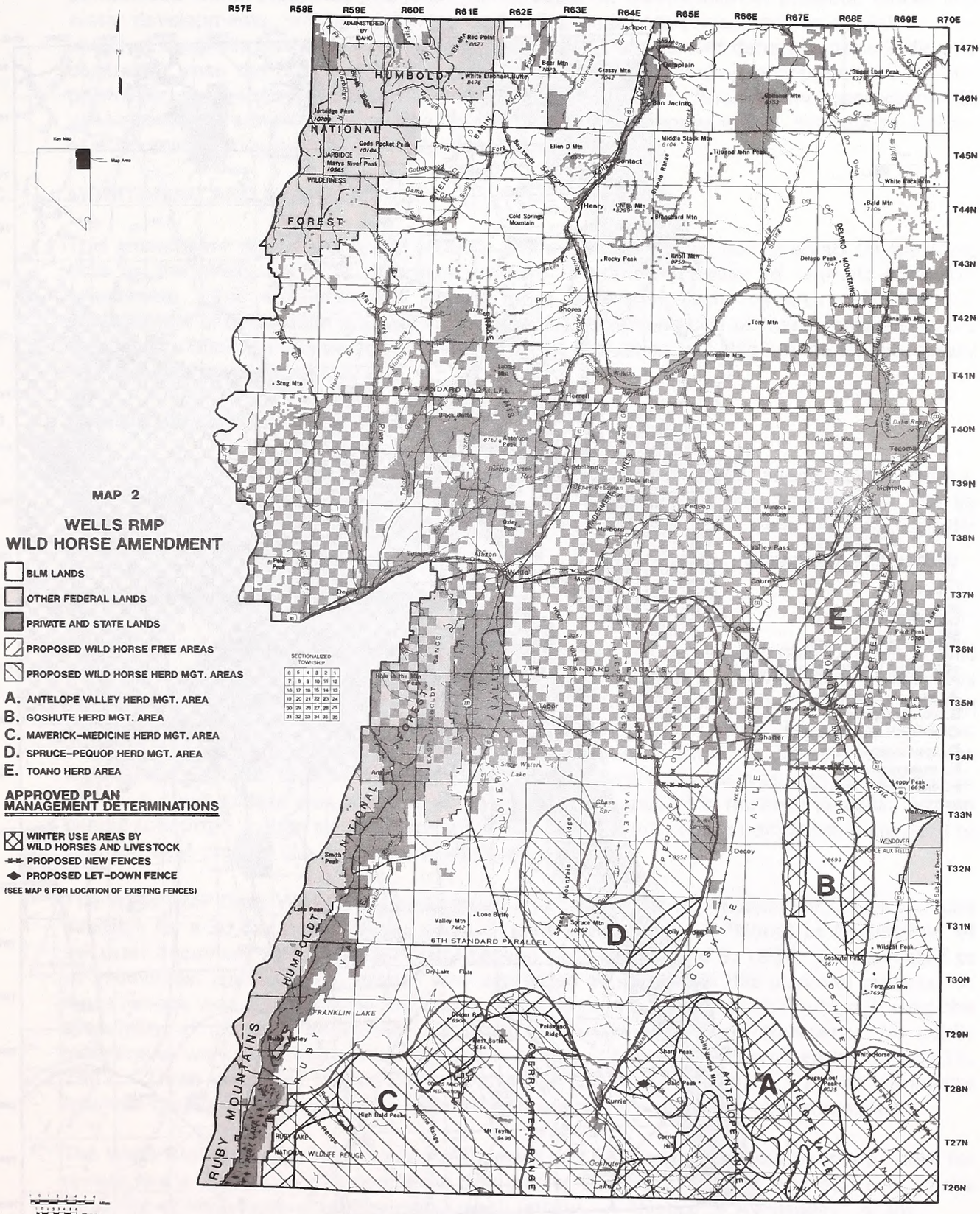
Herd Mgt Areas	Management Determinations				
	Wild Horse Habitat Requirements and Management Practices	Herd Size[1]		Herd Size Adjustment Factors	Other Resource Constraints
		Initial[2]	Long-Term		
Antelope Valley[3]	Develop additional waters on summer range. Modify the existing fence between the Currie and Spruce Allotments to a let-down fence (two half-mile segments).	240	Adjustments will be based on monitoring and grazing allotment evaluations.	Utilization of key forage species by wild horses in areas used in common will not exceed an average of ten[4] percent prior to entry by livestock.	Utilization by all grazing animals will not exceed 55 percent on key forage species by March 31st on winter range. New fencing will only be used when other practices such as control of water, salting, and herding have proved ineffective in providing proper distribution of all grazing animals.
Goshute	Develop additional waters on summer range. Construct up to nine miles of drift or gap fences, if necessary, to prevent wild horse drift north onto checkerboard lands.	160	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.
Maverick-Medicine[3]	Develop additional waters to provide better distribution.	389	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.
Spruce-Pequop	Develop additional waters on summer range. Construct a fence (approximately nine miles) to prevent wild horse drift north onto checkerboard lands.	82	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.
Total		871			

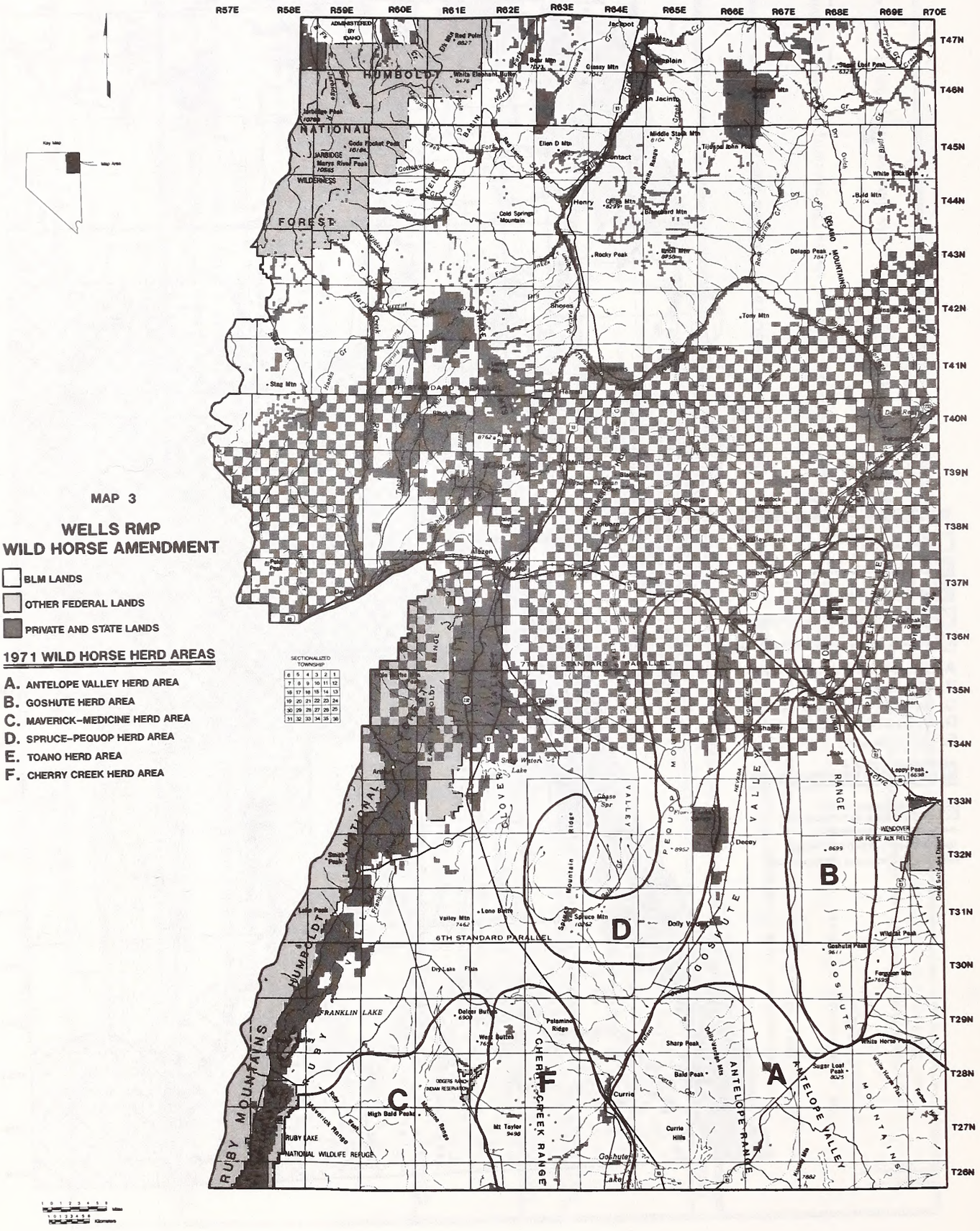
[1] Numbers are in animal units.

[2] The initial numbers were developed through the use of vegetative studies. Monitoring data from 1990-1992 indicates that horse use has increased on the winter range while livestock use has decreased in common use areas.

[3] The initial number of horses for the Cherry Creek Herd Area have been incorporated into both the Antelope Valley (25 percent) and Maverick-Medicine (75 percent) HMAs.

[4] Ten percent use of key forage species (midpoint of slight use category) by wild horses prior to entry by livestock is the level that can be used and still not exceed the total use of 55 percent by March 31st in areas used in common by all grazing animals.


MAP 2
WELLS RMP
WILD HORSE AMENDMENT
BLM LANDS
OTHER FEDERAL LANDS
PRIVATE AND STATE LANDS
PROPOSED WILD HORSE FREE AREAS
PROPOSED WILD HORSE HERD MGT. AREAS
A. ANTELOPE VALLEY HERD MGT. AREA
B. GOSHUTE HERD MGT. AREA
C. MAVERICK-MEDICINE HERD MGT. AREA
D. SPRUCE-PEQUOP HERD MGT. AREA
E. TOANO HERD AREA
APPROVED PLAN
MANAGEMENT DETERMINATIONS
WINTER USE AREAS BY
WILD HORSES AND LIVESTOCK
PROPOSED NEW FENCES
PROPOSED LET-DOWN FENCE
(SEE MAP 6 FOR LOCATION OF EXISTING FENCES)
SECTIONALIZED TOWNSHIP
Key Map
Map Area
R57E
R58E
R59E
R60E
R61E
R62E
R63E
R64E
R65E
R66E
R67E
R68E
R69E
R70E
T47N
T46N
T45N
T44N
T43N
T42N
T41N
T40N
T39N
T38N
T37N
T36N
T35N
T34N
T33N
T32N
T31N
T30N
T29N
T28N
T27N
T26N
HUMBOLDT
NATIONAL
FOREST
JARBIDGE
WILDERNESS
8TH STANDARD PARALLEL
7TH STANDARD PARALLEL
6TH STANDARD PARALLEL
RUBY MOUNTAINS
FRANKLIN LAKE
RUBY LAKE
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
CHERRY CREEK RANGE
ANTELOPE RANGE
GOSHUTE VALLEY
DELANO MOUNTAINS
A
B
C
D
E



MAP 3

WELLS RMP
WILD HORSE AMENDMENT

- BLM LANDS
- OTHER FEDERAL LANDS
- PRIVATE AND STATE LANDS

1971 WILD HORSE HERD AREAS

A. ANTELOPE VALLEY HERD AREA
B. GOSHUTE HERD AREA
C. MAVERICK–MEDICINE HERD AREA
D. SPRUCE–PEQUOP HERD AREA
E. TOANO HERD AREA
F. CHERRY CREEK HERD AREA

Wild horses within the checkerboard areas and numbers in excess of the initial herd size will be removed within statewide priorities. Construction or modification of projects, fences and water developments, will be completed as funding and manpower becomes available. The ability of the Wells Resource Area to implement these management determinations is directly dependent upon the BLM budgeting process. If insufficient funding is appropriated for any given year, some delays in the completion schedule may result. Priorities for accomplishment will be reviewed annually and may be revised based upon changes in law, regulations, policy, or economic factors such as cost effectiveness of projects.

C. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This amendment will be monitored annually and evaluated at five year intervals (at the same time as the Wells RMP) to determine if there is sufficient cause to warrant additional adjustment. The evaluation will consist of a review of each resource objective and management determination and will ascertain if the implementation of these components are meeting the needs of this particular resource. This evaluation will also outline any necessary changes that may be needed.

D. SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS

Support requirements, such as cadastral surveys, engineering design, additional inventories, etc., needed to implement the management determinations of this amendment, will be determined during the preparation of activity or project plans when more detailed, specific proposals are available.

E. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The decision to prepare an amendment to the Wells RMP concerning the management of wild horses in the Wells Resource Area was made in December, 1991. A "Notice of Intent" was published in the Federal Register on January 27, 1992. This notice also included a scoping period during which the public was requested to assist the BLM in identifying planning issues, planning criteria, and identifying alternatives that they wanted to be analyzed in the amendment. A letter to all interest groups, individuals, and agencies was sent on February 6, 1992. A news release was prepared and sent to all newspapers in northern Nevada. Fifteen people submitted written or verbal comments during scoping. These comments were used to help the BLM prepare the draft plan amendment.

The Wells RMP Draft Wild Horse Amendment and Environmental Assessment (EA) was made available for a 30 day public review period in early June, 1992. A "Notice of Availability" of the draft document was published in the Federal Register on June 9, 1992. It was mailed to all individuals, agencies, and groups who expressed an interest in this planning process. A news release was also prepared and sent to all newspapers in northern Nevada indicating the availability of the draft document and asking for public review and comment. No public meetings or workshops were held. The public comment period for the draft ended on July 15, 1992. Three comment letters were received on the draft document. Public comments received during this review period were used to prepare the proposed plan amendment.

The Wells RMP Proposed Wild Horse Amendment and EA was made available to the public for review and a 30 day protest period the first part of October, 1992. It was also sent to the Governor of Nevada for a 60 day consistency review. A "Notice of Availability" of the

proposed document was published in the Federal Register on October 1, 1992. The proposed document was also mailed to all individuals, agencies and groups who participated in and who expressed an interest in this planning effort. The protest period ended on November 20, 1992. Two protests were received; one from Resource Concepts, Inc. for Sorensen Ranches and one jointly signed from the Nevada Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses and Wild Horse Organized Assistance, Inc. The BLM National Director has resolved both of these protests.

PART 2: DECISION RECORD

A. RESOURCE DECISIONS

The Proposed Plan Amendment, as modified by the BLM Director's administrative review, is the environmentally preferable alternative and is selected as the Approved Wild Horse Amendment for the Wells RMP. The resource determinations contained in the Preferred Alternative, as displayed in PART 1: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT section of this document, are the same and are not repeated here.

Mitigating measures, listed under the heading "WILD HORSES" and subheading "Standard Operating Procedures" as outlined in PART II - MANAGEMENT DECISION SUMMARY section in the Wells RMP, will be followed. In addition, those standard operating procedures (SOP) that are applicable to range improvement project development (i.e., fences and water developments) as outlined in the various other resource headings, will also be followed.

B. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

A finding of no significant impact was made on October 2, 1992 by the Nevada State Director. This determination was based on the analysis of the potential impacts as addressed in both the draft and proposed amendment documents. He determined that the impacts are not expected to be significant and that an environmental impact statement is not required (see section VIII. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT on page 21 of the Proposed Wild Horse Amendment and Environmental Assessment document).

C. RATIONALE FOR DECISION

The resource determinations, as outlined in the above approved amendment, were made to facilitate wild horse management for the Wells Resource Area and to prevent wild horse grazing problems on private lands, especially in the checkerboard areas. Implementation of these determinations will not result in any unnecessary environmental deterioration.

D. COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

The determinations in this amendment do not conflict with the other resource management actions (determinations) of the Wells RMP. These determinations have also been coordinated with local and state plans concerning the management of public lands. No conflicts were identified by the Governor's Office during their 60 day consistency review. Where conflicting

direction involving the management of the public lands may occur between this plan amendment and those of state and local governments, this amendment will comply with the laws and statutes enacted by Congress to protect the interests of the citizens of the United States.

These management determinations will be implemented over the next 12 years to coincide with the implementation of the existing Wells RMP. This amendment will be monitored and evaluated at the same time as the Wells RMP, annually and at least every five years respectively.

E. APPROVAL

Billy R. Templeton

Billy R. Templeton, State Director, Nevada

August 2, 1993
Date